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The Southern PATRIOT

Volume 3 | Nashville, Tennessee, January, 1945 | No. 1

WASHINGTON Is Saying

The State of the Union

The President's Message on January 8 and his budget proposals the following day form a comprehensive program for our nation: a program that fits the problems of the war and the peace into a clear perspective.

Emphasizing that the nation's future prosperity hinges on one word—JOBS—the President pointed out that all plans for demobilization and reconversion must revolve around the theme of full employment.

He reiterated his call for prompt action on his "Economic Bill of Rights" which would guarantee lasting security to all Americans. The budget which the President proposed to Congress implemented this demand. He pledged the government to a social and economic program designed to bring the postwar U. S. the highest living standard in its history, with improved public health, decent wages, better housing, cities and roads, and social security protection for all.

At the same time, pointing out that the new state of the war requires even greater exertions to assure earliest possible victory, Mr. Roosevelt called for a national war service act, with guarantees of seniority and wage maintenance.

These goals of full employment and security can be achieved, of course, only on the foundation of victory in the war and peace and cooperation among nations, organized to assure world security. The President pointed out that an enduring peace would not be easily created, "but it can and will be built."

"We propose to stand together with the United Nations, not for the war alone, but for the victory for which the war is fought. It is not only a common danger which unites us but a common hope. Ours is an association not of governments, but of peoples, and the people's hope is peace. Throughout the world wherever men love freedom, the hope and purpose of the peoples are for peace, a peace that is durable and secure."

Thus the President has set the stage for Congress. The responsibility for carrying through this bold and necessary program now rests with Congress and the American people.

Editors Score Vote Bars In Unprecedented Meeting

In a significant and unprecedented meeting in Atlanta last month, the South's outstanding editors and writers gathered to discuss voting restrictions in the thirteen Southern states, and found themselves in overwhelming agreement that bars to the ballot must go.

Presided over by Mark Ethridge, Publisher of the Louisville Courier-Journal, the impressive group of participants gained a comprehensive and shocking picture of suffrage restrictions, as they listened to report after report of disfranchisement through poll taxes, exclusive primaries and restraining registration laws and practices.

Though the sponsoring group, the Committee of Editors and Writers of the South, proposed the meeting only to review and make available information on existing voting restrictions, almost every participant took the floor to denounce suffrage limitations and to recognize their removal as necessary and inevitable.

Among the sponsors were:

Harry M. Ayers, Publisher, Anniston (Ala.) Star; George Buchanan, Editor, Columbia (S. C.) Record; Virginius Dabney, Editor, Richmond (Va.) Times Dispatch; Jonathan Daniels, Editor, Raleigh (N. C.) News and Observer; James Dombrowski, Editor, Southern Patriot; Roscoe Dungee, Editor, (Okla.) Black Dispatch; Jennings Perry, Editor, Nashville Tennessean; Nelson Poynter, Publisher, St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times; Harry Strozier, contributing Editor, Macon (Ga.) News; and authors Lillian Smith, Frances Gaither, Harnett Kane and Clark Foreman. Among the participants were: Clayton Fritchey, Editor, New Orleans (La.) Item and Edgar Ray, Editor, Tampa (Fla.) Daily Times.

In this issue, the Southern Patriot summarizes in part the information compiled at the Atlanta meeting.

Danger — Minefields Ahead

TRENDS

Supreme Court X's Law in Texas

Christian America's union - busting plans were dealt a body blow when the U. S. Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional a Texas law requiring union organizers to obtain a license from the state. Holding that the law violated the First Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees citizens the right of free speech and assembly, the court declared: "If one who solicits support for the cause of labor may be required to register as a condition to the exercise of his right to make a public speech, so may he who seeks to rally support for any social, business, religious, or political cause." The decision is expected to undermine other anti-labor laws (Texas, Arkansas, Florida) based on the theory that a labor union is a commercial enterprise.

* * *

First-Class Shipbuilders

ADDSCO Shipyard, Mobile, Alabama—The previous ship-building record at Pinto Island was broken by one day on January 7, 1945, with the launching of a 22,400-ton tanker 61 days after the keel was laid. The ship was constructed entirely by Negro craftsmen working under white supervisors, in the only yard in the Gulf Zone where Negroes are employed as first-class machinists. This record-breaking feat—in a time of desperate manpower shortage—confounds racists who insist Negroes are unable to learn skilled crafts, and stands as a monument to the contribution of Negroes to the U. S. war effort.

ON GUARD!

In Texas, and possibly in other Southern states, a dangerous attack on democratic elections threatens. On the pretext of invalidating the Supreme Court's decision in the Texas "white primary" case, which gave Negro voters the right to vote in primary elections, anti-democratic groups are pushing a measure to repeal all state laws concerning primary elections as was done in South Carolina.

What such legislation would mean is the return to the convention system of choosing candidates of a political party. This system permits a tiny group of powerful politicians to control conventions—and means the end of free elections. The people of every Southern state must be on guard to halt this conspiracy!

America Needs Everybody's Vote

By DR. FRANK P. GRAHAM

Public Member of the National War Labor Board and President, University of North Carolina.

The struggle for political democracy has, in its historic stages, centered in the battles for the right to vote. In our time, the battle is against the poll tax, which today tends to keep some 6 million white citizens and 4 million Negro citizens from taking their proper part in democracy. . . .

There is high promise for our freedom and democracy in the increasing insistence of Americans for full suffrage. Victories for freedom abroad inspire us to struggle for victories for democracy at home. While the anti-democratic armies are in retreat all over the earth is the time for the advance of the forces of democracy in the United States, so that all men and women have the right to vote regardless of race, color, creed, or economic position. The America of our faith and hopes needs the intelligent interest and votes of all for the organization of justice and peace in the world.

—reprinted from AMMUNITION, Jan., 1945.

Education For Tomorrow

Problems of postwar education and democracy keynoted conferences between lay leaders and educators in North Carolina and Tennessee last month. Jointly sponsored by the National Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education and the state Education Associations, the meetings brought together educators, farmers, churchmen, labor and business representatives, doctors and women's club leaders for mutual consideration of current economic, social and political questions. Both meetings featured appeals by laymen for wider educational opportunities, more health and welfare facilities, and intelligent participation of citizens in their government.

* * *

Seven TVA's?

Nation-wide interest is once again focused on the TVA, as plans are proposed for similar projects in seven watersheds of the nation, and a bill for a Missouri Valley Authority is introduced in Congress. A little-known but vitally important fact pointed out by Chairman David E. Lilienthal is that TVA, far from being simply a $450,000,000 subsidy to the region, is self-liquidating. Within 30 years the people of the area will have repaid the nation in full for the costs of power development.

* * *

Frame-Up Fails

The frame-up against William DeBerry, young Negro CIO organizer, was smashed when the North Carolina Supreme Court dismissed charges that he had "assaulted" Louise Johnson, a white company-union official, at a War Labor Board hearing last June in Winston-Salem. The trumped-up case featured appeals to race prejudice and outright perjury by "witnesses of proven character" in the unsuccessful attempt to discredit the cause of organized labor and defeat the organization of the huge Reynolds tobacco plant.

Victory For Fair Play

Economic discrimination against Negroes in labor unions was outlawed by two court decisions early in January. The California Supreme Court forbade a boilermakers union, which denied Negroes full membership, to enforce a closed shop. In a similar case involving railroad workers, the United States Supreme Court ruled that a union which purports to represent an entire group of employees may not enter into a contract which discriminates against any class of workers within that group.

* * *

Sen. Hill's Phone Bill: $100,000,000

A bill introduced in Congress by Senator Lister Hill of Alabama would set up a Rural Telephone Authority, authorized to spend $100,000,000in its first year to put telephone service into farm homes. The number of farm telephones dropped from 2,500,000 to 1,500,000 in the ten year period, 1930-1940.

"Christian America" Opens Fire

"Christian America" has fired the opening guns in its anti-labor crusade, in the first days of several state legislatures. In Texas and Georgia, their "Right to Work" Amendment to the State Constitution outlawing maintenance of membership and check-off agreements and the closed shop, has been introduced.

In Tennessee, every member of the State Legislature received copies of the Texas anti-labor bill and as well a copy of the proposed Amendment limiting the tax on incomes, inheritances and gifts to 25%. It was sent by a Mr. L. S. Franklin, who signed himself Director, National Tax Relief Committee, Box 184, Route 7, Greensboro, N. C.

It is significant that on the first day of the last session of the Tennessee legislature in 1943, its members were also circularized with Christian American propaganda.

THE WORDS

These State Constitutions Say:

Alabama . . . All . . . citizens possess . . . equal, civil and political rights.

Arkansas . . . The equality of all persons before the law is recognized and shall ever remain inviolate, nor shall any citizen ever be deprived of any right, privilege, or immunity, nor exempted from any burden or duty, on account of race, color, or previous condition.

Florida . . . Guaranteeing equal civil and political rights to all.

Kentucky . . . All elections shall be free and equal.

North Carolina . . . All men are created equal.

Oklahoma . . . No power, civil or military shall ever interfere to prevent the free exercise of the right of suffrage by those entitled to such right.

South Carolina . . . All elections shall be free and open and every inhabitant of this State possessing the qualifications provided for in this Constitution shall have an equal right to elect officers and be elected to fill public office.

Tennessee . . . Elections shall be free and equal.

Texas . . . All free men . . . have equal rights, and no man or set of men, is entitled to exclusive separate public emoluments or privileges, but in consideration of public services.

Virginia . . . All men are by nature equally free and independent.

THE DEEDS

Yet in the thirteen Southern states, voting statistics mock these words. For every citizen who votes in the South, three potential voters are kept from the polls by restrictions of endless variety. Among the devices graphically described by authors and editors at the Atlanta meeting were the following:

Thomas Sancton, Mississippi author, said poll tax receipts two years old were required of electors in his state and that those offering themselves for ballot privileges must be able to read any section of the Mississippi constitution to the satisfaction of the election officials.

Harnett Kane, Louisiana author, said the method adopted in his state to discourage voting was to designate pool halls, bar rooms and houses of prostitution as voting places.

John C. Hunt, Editor of the South Carolina Federationist, stated that there was no longer any such thing as a secret ballot in South Carolina. "They just throw a lot of ballots down in front of the voters," he said. "One has to pick out the ballot he desires to vote in full view of the election officials." He said it was impossible to vote a split ticket.

Oklahoma registration laws were described by Roscoe Dungee, Editor of The Black Dispatch. "The registrar is not required to maintain a permanent registration place; he is not required to register prospective electors at any given period during the day and the registration period is confined to a ten-day period ending ten days prior to each election. No penalties are provided for registrars guilty of irregularities or infractions of the registration act."

For further information on voting restrictions in the South, see the next page.

Southerners Push Forward In Fight For Free Ballot

In every Southern state, the people are moving to wipe out voting restrictions and breathe new life into American democracy. Because of differing legal and constitutional provisions, some states are making faster progress than others.

Georgia: Poll Tax Repeal Probable

As we go to press, the Georgia poll tax appears headed for the scrap heap. Governor Ellis Arnall has warned his State Assembly that if it failed to repeal the tax, he would suspend it by executive order. His statement followed a vote by the legislature refusing to exempt servicemen from the tax. The Georgia anti-poll tax movement is supported by such leading state figures as Senate President Frank Gross and House Speaker Roy Harris.

Tennessee Tries Again

In Tennessee, poll tax repeal legislation passed by the State Legislature in 1943 was declared unconstitutional by the State Supreme Court. Anti-poll-tax forces there are concentrating their fire to pass legislation repealing certain onerous provisions of the poll tax. For example: lifting the poll tax from women; cutting the tax to 50c, the minimum provided in the state constitution, and exempting all veterans from payment and abolition of poll taxes in primary elections.

48th State Fights for Secret Ballot

In South Carolina, small-d democrats are fighting for a secret ballot. South Carolina is the only state in the Union without this protection to the voter. The Charleston Central Labor Union is taking the lead in mobilizing many leading citizens of the state; State Senator Oliver T. Wallace is prominent in the movement.

Cradle of Democracy Rocking

In Virginia, the wheels are in motion to lift the poll tax for servicemen through the calling of a constitutional convention, now before the people for approval.

Many Virginians had hoped at this opportune time to push through repeal of the poll tax for all citizens, but the poll taxers in the State Legislature forced through the Governor's provision over strong opposition that the convention, if held, be limited to the sole question of lifting the poll tax for servicemen. Anti poll tax forces are contesting the legality of this limitation.

"no state shall" . . . BUT MOST STATES DO . . .

"No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges . . . of citizens of the United States"

—14th Amendment to the Constitution

The ballot is the cornerstone of a democracy.

Anything that interferes with a free and unfettered ballot is anti-democratic and contrary to the objectives for which we fight.

The cornerstone of our democracy needs strengthening. Too many obstacles to the exercise of the right to vote have been raised, and nowhere is this more true than in the Southern states.

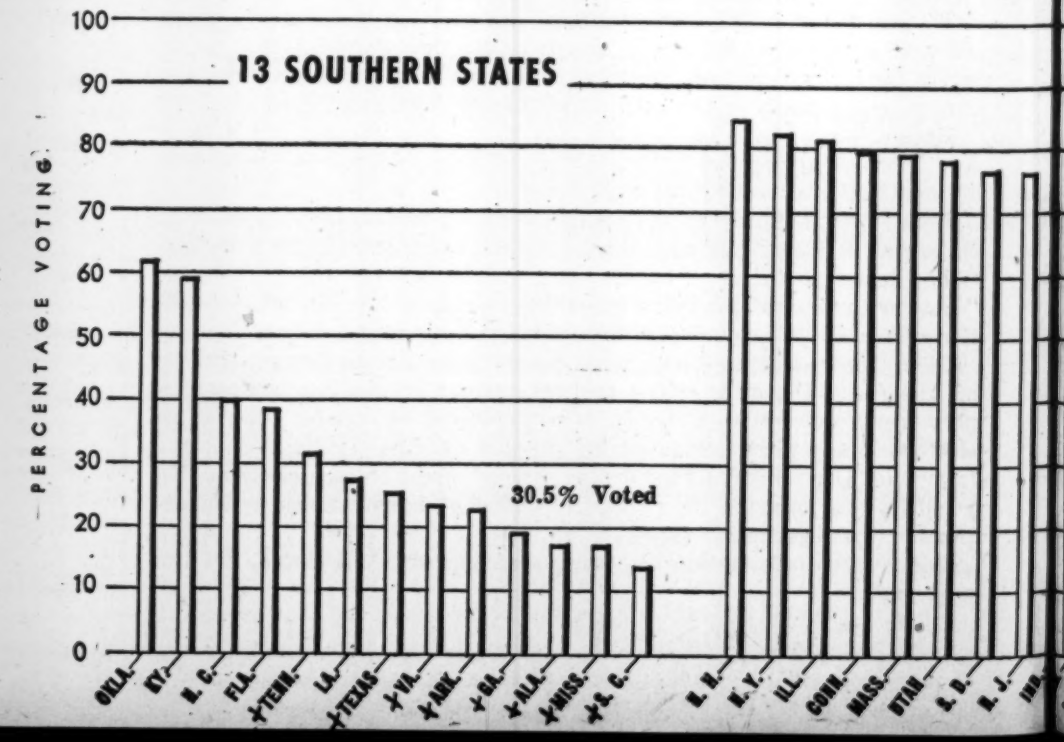
Some of these restrictions upon the franchise are:

1. Time and place of registration: In many cases the time and place of registration is a mystery to the majority of people. Too often the periods of registration are limited (15 days in Alabama) and the places to register inconveniently located. Regulations vary not only from state to state but from county to county.

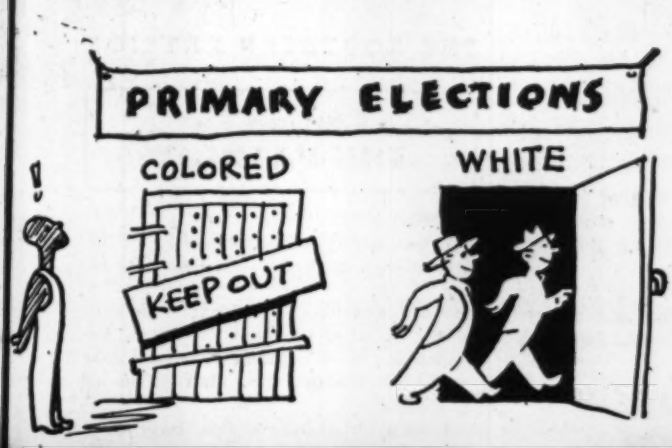
2. Residence requirements: Excessive residence requirements have kept many war workers and sharecroppers from voting. The two-year residence requirement is particularly hard on the 66% of the Nation's tenants who live in the South, of whom one-third change their residence every year.

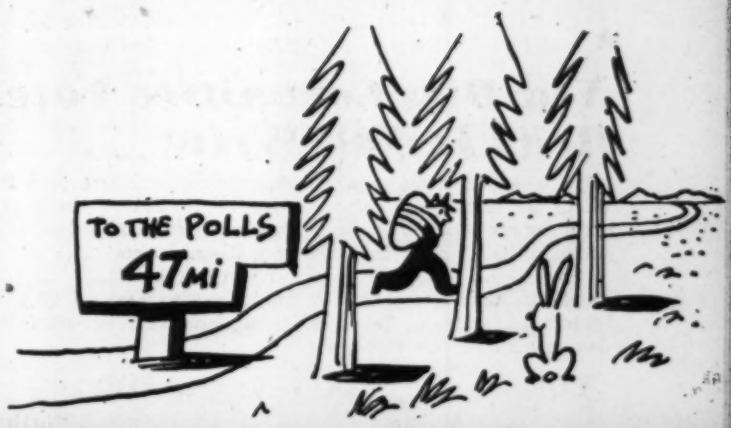
VOTING

in the 1944 presidential election



SHOWING THE PERCENTAGE OF POTENTIAL VOTERS CASTING BALLOTS IN THE 1944 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION





RE ARE BARRIERS RAISED IN SOME SOUTHERN STATES

3. Power of registrar: The administration of literacy tests by registrars generally gives these officials excessive discretionary powers and enables them to disqualify many who are politically uninformed. The limitations of the laws with respect to literacy, employment, residence and even property qualifications help increase these discretionary powers.

4. The poll tax: Levied in 8 Southern states, this annual tax is a great deterrent to voting. In West Virginia where there is no poll tax, four out of five potential voters went to the polls in 1940, while in the neighboring poll tax state of Virginia only one out of five potential voters actually cast ballots in 1940.

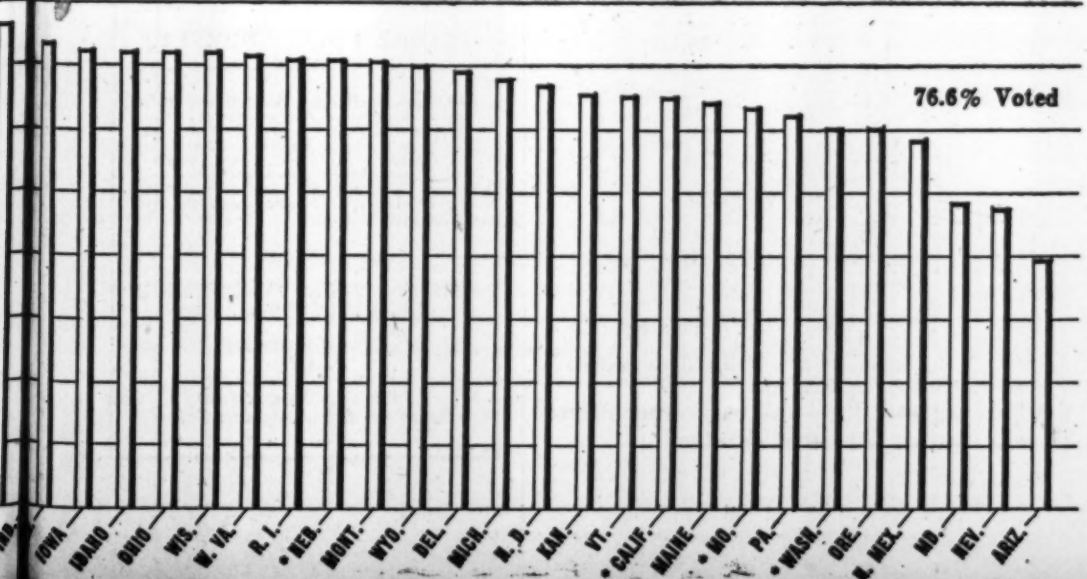
5. Primaries: Most elections in Southern states are settled in the Democratic primaries. In seven of the Southern states Negroes have a limited participation in the primaries of the Democratic Party, but in six states there is a "white primary," which effectively disfranchises about one-third of the population of these states.

6. General elections: The limited hours for voting keep many working people from the polls. In Tennessee the polls are open from 9 to 4.

Fifteen states provide time off with pay for voting. Only 2 of these, Texas and Kentucky, are in the South.

Not all Southern states provide for an absentee ballot.

THE OTHER 35 STATES



NOTES

X Poll tax states

• Soldier vote not included

22.8% of potential voters voted in 8 poll tax states

In one state, S. C., the primary vote (26%) was greater than the vote in the general election (13.8%).

★

New Dies Committee Vote: Read It And Write

The Dies Committee became permanent on January 4, by a House vote of 207-186. Thirty per cent of the Democrats and 80 per cent of the Republicans in the House voted for continuation of the Committee. Of the 70 Democratic votes for the Committee, all but 7 came from Southern Congressmen.

Forty-three Southern Congressmen voted against the Committee. In three Southern states—Kentucky, Virginia, and North Carolina—the majority of Congressmen voted against continuation. Texas was evenly divided. The vote in Florida and Louisiana was unanimously for continuation.

FOR	AGAINST
Alabama	
Boykin	Rains
Grant	Jarman
Andrews	Sparkman
Hobbs	Patrick
Manasco	
Arkansas	
Gathings	Hays
Mills	Harris
Cravens	
Norrell	
Florida	
Peterson	
Price	
Cannon	
Hendricks	
Rogers	
Georgia	
Peterson	Ramspeck
Cox	Vinson
Pace	Tarver
Camp	
Gibson	
Wood	
Brown	
Kentucky	
May	Gregory
Robsion	Clements
	O'Neal
	Chelf
	Spence
	Bates
Louisiana	
Hebert	
Maloney	
Domengeaux	
McKenzie	
Morrison	
Larcade	
Allen	
Mississippi	
Rankin	Whittington
Whitten	
Abernethy	
Winstead	
Colmer	
McGehee	

FOR	AGAINST
North Carolina	
Doughton	Bonner
	Kerr
	Folger
	Cooley
	Durham
	Burgin
	Ervin
	Bulwinkle
	Weaver
Oklahoma	
Schwabe	Boren
Stigler	Monroney
Stewart	
Johnson	
Wickersham	
South Carolina	
Rivers	
Riley	
Hare	
Bryson	
Richards	
McMillan	
Tennessee	
Murray	
Cooper	Kefauver
Davis	Priest
Texas	
Beckworth	Patman
Lanham	Combs
Gossett	Johnson, L. A.
West	Pickett
Russell	Thomas
Worley	Mansfield
Mahon	Thomason
Kilday	Poage
Fisher	Lyle
Virginia	
Drewry	Bland
Robertson	Satterfield
Smith	Burch
	Woodrum
	Flannagan

Absent: Trimble, Sikes, Chapman, Brooks, Barden, Clark, Rizley, Reece, Jennings, Gore, Earthman, Courtney, Sumners, Johnson, L. B., Daughton.

THE SOUTHERN PATRIOT suggests that you write your Representative your views on his vote on this important question.

Letters To THE PATRIOT

To the editor:

I was deeply impressed with the information contained in the December issue of the Southern Patriot regarding the organization, activities and policies of the so-called Christian American Association. Very valuable information is presented through the distribution of this issue.

I wish to distribute this issue to a large number of representatives of the American Federation of Labor in the different states. I therefore request that you send me 3,000 copies.

WILLIAM GREEN, President.
American Federation of Labor.

* * *

To the Editor:

Please send me twenty-five copies of the Christian American expose of the PATRIOT. The information contained therein is startling to say the least, and I would like to undertake to publicize it on a small scale.

LUCY M. BJORKMAN
Asheville, N. C.

* * *

From the Editor:

You will be interested to know that already the circulation of our special Christian American issue has reached over 100,000. Orders for additional copies are still pouring in from organizations fighting the so-called Christian American anti-labor proposals in state legislatures all over the Union. Extra copies may be secured from THE SOUTHERN PATRIOT at cost, $10.00 per thousand plus express charges.

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THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE FOR HUMAN WELFARE

CLARK FOREMAN
President

JAMES A. DOMBROWSKI
Executive Secretary and Editor

Dear Governor Stevenson:

"We believe that the dismissal of Dr. Homer Price Rainey as President of the University of Texas is a serious blow to the University of Texas, to Southern Education, and to the freedom we are fighting for today.

"We Southern educators have long been proud of Dr. Rainey—for his integrity, his brilliant and far-seeing record, his contribution to the advancement of Southern learning.

"We feel that his dismissal is a threat to the independence and intellectual honesty of every professor and every educational institution.

"We urge you to exert every influence for the reinstatement of Dr. Rainey as President of the University of Texas and further to appoint men of wisdom, understanding and experience to the positions now vacant on the Board of Regents."

Prof. Mary B. Allen, Newcomb College, La.
Prof. J. O. Bailey, Univ. of North Carolina
Prof. George Banerlein, North Carolina State College
Prof. K. L. Barkley, Woman's College, U. of N. C.
Prof. Howard K. Beale, Univ. of N .C.
Prof. Belle B. Beard, Sweet Briar College, Va.
Prof. Howard W. Beers, Univ. of Kentucky
Prof. Ellinor H. Behre, Louisiana State Univ.
Prof. A. D. Beittel, Guilford College, N. C.
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Prof. L. Walter Seegert, North Carolina State College
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Prof. W. F. Stinespring, Duke Univ., N. C.
Prof. Jane Summerell, Woman's College, U. N. C.
Prof. Blanche Tansill, Woman's College, U. N. C.
Prof. Samuel R. Tipton, Univ. of Alabama
Prof. John M. Turner, Jr., Lynchburg College, Va.
Prof. Ralph E. Wager, Emory University, Ga.
Dean Albert Weidler, Berea College, Ky.
Dean H. G. Williamson, Wood Jr. College, Miss.
Dean Comer M. Woodward, Emory Univ., Ga.

Convinced that academic freedom knows no geographic boundaries, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare asked Southern educators to express their sentiments on the dismissal of President Rainey. Their statement, above, was sent to the Governor and the Texas legislators when they convened January 9.

The fate of Dr. Homer Rainey and the University of Texas is now in the hands of the Texas State Senate. They must approve or reject the Governor's selections of men to fill the vacancies on the college Board of Regents. THE SOUTHERN PATRIOT urges you to communicate your views to the Texas legislators.